

THE RETREAT AT FORT BAKER

Proposed by
THE FORT BAKER RETREAT GROUP LLC

Passport Resorts LLC; Equity Community Builders LLC (Managing Partners)

With

Dolce International, Inc. (Management Company)

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THE RETREAT AT FORT BAKER

Passport/Equity Community Builders/Dolce International

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Retreat at Fort Baker (“The Retreat”) will be a small, state-of-the-art meeting and conference facility specializing in innovative programs that enhance and support numerous themes, including leadership training, the arts, wellness and ecology. Taking advantage of Fort Baker’s extraordinary natural setting and internationally recognized location, The Retreat will also cater to the special requirements of corporate, government, and non-profit organizational and strategic meetings that necessitate a high level of focus, a relatively relaxed and intimate atmosphere, and an emphasis on personal service.

In addition, The Retreat will be family friendly, enabling families to take advantage of the programs offered by the Discovery Museum, the Headlands Institute, as well as those at The Retreat. The Retreat will sponsor a variety of programs available to the general public through its own on-site Learning Center and programming partners.

The Retreat will be a true model of historic preservation, environmental sustainability, and public access in a way that is clearly transparent and legible to visitors and the community. At the heart of our proposal is the team’s dedication to an approach that minimizes impacts on the historical and cultural resources, as well as the natural environment. Therefore, first and foremost, we propose an absolutely minimal size project, with as few changes to the Project site as possible. Our proposal is to utilize all of the historic buildings, and many of the existing non-historic structures available in the Project Area to limit new development. The adaptive re-use of existing structures has been chosen as the most environmentally sustainable action that can be taken on this site.

The minimal amount of proposed new construction is limited to isolated areas already previously developed, and is designed organically, with sustainable building principles guiding every aspect of the buildings’ design and operation. Our approach, which is evidenced by the team’s substantive experience and track record in sustainable development, is to use the resources on site, not expand on them. When new materials and systems are required, the first choice is to look for innovative solutions that emphasize renewable energy, “green building” materials, and opportunities for recycling.

The Fort Baker site warrants a truly unique approach to its redevelopment as a community oriented facility and National Park. Its special natural characteristics, those of serenity and solitude, need to be maintained as a place to encourage peaceful reflection and inspiring discourse in the midst of the frenetic urban environment of the Bay Area. It’s historical significance demands that the existing characteristics of the Fort be maintained, and that new activities have as little impact on the general atmosphere of the site as possible. In addition, public access to this extraordinary location needs to be encouraged and enhanced by adaptive re-use of the site. Our proposal begins and ends with the following basic Development Principles:

- Create an atmosphere where the emphasis is on intelligence, intimacy, clarity, simplicity, creativity, and growth.
- The natural site and the history of the place are the story—new development should be designed to only enhance it, or be in the background.
- A small project is not only environmentally appropriate, but economically efficient and needed in the marketplace.
- It is the experience of the place, and high level of service that people will remember, not the lack of conventional recreational and entertainment facilities.
- Sustainable development means pragmatic and replicable integration of environmental concerns in all aspects of design, construction and operations—not just interpretive exhibits or high cost models.
- The historic buildings and surrounding context establish the tone and feeling of the place—an intimate community focus in a somewhat wild and isolated setting.

DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

In order to achieve the basic Development Principles, and maintain the NPS mission, The Retreat at Fort Baker will be comprised of two distinct components:

1. A for-profit Lodging and Conference Center that will occupy most of the historic buildings along the Parade Ground, and eleven new, simple, small, and sustainably designed buildings that will be sensitively sited on the hillside above the Parade Ground.
2. A not-for-profit Fort Baker Learning Center and focus on the scholarly pursuit of themes central to the Project, including environmental sustainability, individual creativity, non-profit leadership renewal, the arts, wellness, and ecology, which will occupy a single building on the Parade Ground. In addition, six small residences on Kober Street will house various scholars/creatives-in-residence.

These two components will operate individually, and as separate legal entities (one as a limited liability company and the other as a 501c3 non-profit corporation, or project of an existing foundation) and have separate boards of directors. However, the project is designed to promote synergy and close cooperation between the two entities and will encourage the sharing of facilities and exchange of services between them.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Project- Generally

The Project will consist of 2 primary components-a for profit Conference Center, and a non-profit Learning Center. There will be a total of 156 guest rooms on site, with 56 being located in the historic buildings around the Parade Ground, and 100 new rooms created in 11 buildings sensitively sited on existing building pads primarily on the hill to the east. There is a net reduction of 13,000 square feet of developed area for the entire project (61,000 s.f. demolished; 48,000 s.f. of new construction). There will be no new construction on the Parade Ground.

Conference Center

The Conference Center will have nearly 20,000 sq ft. of meeting space. These meeting rooms will be located in Buildings 601, 602, the Chapel, and the former gym, Building 623. No new construction for a large meeting hall, as outlined in the FEIS, will be necessary.

Learning Center

To distinguish the Retreat at Fort Baker from standard business conference centers, a Learning Center, housing a number of non-profit institutions, will be created. These include The Fort Baker Institute (mandated by the FEIS and operated by the NPS), The Center for Creativity and Sustainability (comprised of MacArthur and other Fellows and operated by the Jefferson Institute), and the Center for Non Profit Leadership Renewal (operated by the Tides Foundation). These organizations and our programming partners will be responsible for creating a full schedule of life long learning programs and workshops at The Retreat. In order to serve a broad and diversified population, 20% of all the rooms at the Retreat will be allocated for guests attending programs and conferences at the federal per diem rate.

Scholars In Residence

The Center for Creativity and Sustainability will work to bring numerous scholars, including MacArthur and other Fellows to the site. They will live and work at the Retreat for anywhere from one week to six months and provide extensive public participation in their research through lectures and workshops at the Retreat and other venues in the GGNRA.

Traffic and Parking Mitigation

The minimization of traffic and parking impacts to the site and local community are one of the foremost goals of the Retreat. An extensive array of mitigation measures, beyond those outlined in the FEIS have been proposed, including:

- A strong commitment to working with the local community and other park partners in developing a comprehensive, site-wide plan that meets all parties objectives;
- Extensive use of shuttles to bring guests and employees to the site, around the site, and to local attractions;
- Broad use of marketing tools to educate the public and potential guests of the goals and measures being implemented at the site to reduce traffic to the site;
- Capturing the vast majority of vehicles that do come to the Retreat at the check in building (Building 405) to maintain as car-free a site as possible;
- Broad use of financial incentives and disincentives to discourage use of cars;
- The creation of a staffed transportation information desk, located at the center of the Project;
- The directing of all traffic coming to the Retreat down Bunker Road (near the Ft. Cronkite tunnel) to avoid Alexander Avenue backups. A new, coordinated traffic light will be in place at this intersection;
- Scheduling programs, check in/out times, length of stays, conferences, and deliveries to avoid peak traffic times;
- The creation of 12 on-site staff housing units to reduce employee trips;
- Reservations system for visitors coming to the Wellness Center or attending programs;
- The reduction of parking on site to a total of only 295 spaces (this is less than a third allowed for the entire site in the FEIS).

Commitment to Sustainability

The Fort Baker Retreat Group is committed to making the Retreat a model of sustainable development. The team has extensive experience at its other projects including the Thoreau Center for Sustainability at the Presidio, Post Ranch Inn in Big Sur, and Jean Michel Cousteau's Fiji Island Resort in Fiji. Just some of the sustainability measures to be included at the Retreat include:

- Extensive use of green building materials in all new and renovation construction;
- Minimal disturbance of soils for new construction by using existing building pads;
- The use of pervious surfaces for parking to minimize runoff and pollution into water sources including the bay;
- Comprehensive plan for minimizing waste, reducing resource depletion, and maximizing use of recycled materials in development and operation of Retreat;
- Utilizing building integrated photovoltaic (PV) systems for on-site power generation;
- The incorporation of passive solar design in all new construction;
- The capturing of rain water for irrigation during dry season;
- Broad use of energy efficient appliances, HVAC, and other systems;
- Promotion and use of alternative fuel powered vehicles;
- Comprehensive programs for educating the public to sensitive wildlife habitat, environmental issues, and sustainability concerns at the site;
- The use of native, drought tolerant landscaping.

Economics and Financing

To keep the Retreat as small as possible, and room rates affordable (particularly to the non-profit segment), a creative, low impact method of financing the Project had to be created. Drawing upon the team's experience in developing non-profit centers we chose to add the Learning Center to the Retreat. This allowed the infusion of low cost non-profit program-related investment, and provided benefits to the local community through a variety of programming, lectures and workshops. The total cost for the Project is \$63M. Details of the Project cost and financing sources are as follows: